

OBSERVATIONS ON MUSIC BY AN ALCOHOLIC (1984)

I have been drunk for thousands of nights
listening to symphony music on the radio;
I doubt that there are many men my age
who have listened to as much of this music
as I —
even those in the profession.

I am not a musicologist
but
I have some observations:

- (a) music played in the symphony halls and on the radio is taken from the same 50 or 60 pieces — which are played over and over and over again.
- (b) there has been other music written.
- (c) the Second Movements of most symphonies are only good for insomniacs.
- (d) chamber music has every right to be energetic and entertaining, but most of it is less interesting than the Second Movements of the symphonies.
- (e) very few composers know how to END their symphonies
but
most openings, like romances, have some early charm.
- (f) i prefer a conductor who inserts his personality (interpretation) rather than the purist who follows the rote of the master.
- (g) of course, there are always some who insert so much personality that the creator of the piece almost vanishes.
- (h) music is much like love-making but some composers never climax; others over-climax leaving themselves and us jaded and worn.
- (i) humor is lacking in most so-called great works.
- (j) Bach is the hardest to play badly because he made so few spiritual and technical mistakes, and it seems to transfer over, even to mediocre conductors.
- (k) almost all works could have been written shorter.
- (l) too much modern music is written from the safe structure of a university position — one must still experience life in its rawer forms in order to write of it well.
- (m) music is the most passionate of the art forms;
I wish I had been a musician.

(n) very few writers also know how to END their works.

this is it.

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having the flu and reading Rabelais
as the cat snores
and the bathroom toilet tank
hisses
my eyes burn.

I put Rabelais down:
this is what
writers do
to each other.

for him, I
substitute
a tab of
vitamin C.

if we could only swallow
death
like that (I think we
can)
or that death could
swallow us
like that (I think it
does).

life is not all what
we think it
is, it's only what we
imagine it to
be
and for us
what we imagine
becomes
mostly so.

I imagine myself
rid of this
flu

I see myself parading the
sidewalks among the cunts and
peckers
of this world ...

meanwhile, the cat, like other